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THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

BY THE SAME WRITER

DAY DREAMS OF GREECE

C. Elkin Matthews

THE
QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

by
C. Wharton Stork

July 1, 1926

BY

CHARLES WHARTON STORK

LONDON

ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET

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The thanks of the author are due to the proprietors of "Lippincott's Magazine" and "The Smart Set" for courteous permission to reprint several of the lyrics in this volume.

PREFACE

MY resolution not to write a preface is broken herewith, for a sufficient cause, let me hope. The title of this volume, though it came so spontaneously as to preclude another choice, may be obscure to some readers. The idea was derived from a poem by Edouard Mörike entitled "Gesang Weyla's," or Weyla's Song. Weyla is an impersonation of the poet, and his lines may be rendered in English somewhat as follows :—

Thou art Orplede, my land,
Remotely gleaming ;
The mists float upward from thy sun-bright strand
To where the faces of the gods are beaming.

Primeval rivers spring renewed,
Thy silver girdle weaving, child.
Before thy godhead bend subdued
Kings, thy worshippers and watchers mild.

This song, especially in its musical setting by Hugo Wolf, is very widely known in Germany, but unfortunately Mörike, though second only to Goethe in lyrical range and felicity, is hardly even a name to English readers.

Orplede was for the poet the child of his dreams, the ideal land where his imagination might wander,

PREFACE

a kingdom he might people as he chose with beings mortal or divine. Such lands have often been created by the fancy; we have but to think of Ogygia, of Prospero's island, and the many conceptions of Hesperia. Keats, in his sonnet "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer," says:—

"Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold."

We may therefore delight ourselves with thinking of a whole archipelago in the

"Golden remote wild west, where the sea without shore is,"

and surely no one will take the trouble to object if a new-comer lays claim to some deserted islet. My only apology is to the genius of Mörike, whose conception I have used arbitrarily.

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THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE,
AND OTHER LYRICS



The Queen of Orplede : a Romance

Characters : THE QUEEN
THE POET

I. THE POET'S SONG

Gliding down from the ocean's rim,
Dolphin-drawn in my shallop of pearl,
Glad I behold and hail thee, dim
Island-home of my dream-sweet girl.

Welcome, land !
Welcome, strand !
Inlet bordered with water-weed ;
Mystic land,
Gleaming strand,—
Welcome, Kingdom of Orplede !

II. THE POET DISEMBARKS

Lightly now I leap to shore,
While the ripples from my boat
Stir the broad, green leaves that float
On the slow wave dreamily.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

Then I lean on tip-toe o'er
Where 'mid fringing reeds a lily
Nestles in the shadows chilly,
White as whitest swan can be.

When I stretch my golden wand
Toward the snow-pure, swan-soft blossom,
Toward the flower with folded bosom,
Look, the lily swims to me !
Now I kneel upon the sand
And with all a wizard's art
Bid the tight-closed petals part,
Part and ope their treasury.

III. THE INCANTATION

Lily pale,
Lily frail,
Open thy casket, unclasp thy bower.
Appear, O queen
That dwellest unseen
Concealed in the cup of the wondrous flower.

I have battled long
In the world of wrong,
But now I am come with spirit at rest
To linger with thee
By the lazy sea
And sink my head on thy silver breast.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

IV. THE QUEEN APPEARS OUT OF THE LILY AND ANSWERS

I have lain all day
Deep down in the cool where filmy-finned fish were
gliding.

I have heard the play
Of ducks 'mid the woven sedge and willow roots
hiding.

For you I waited,
For you I listened,
Till slanting light
O'er the waters glistened,
And now I come at your call.
I open my cell
With fingers as white
And out of the lily-heart's
Golden light
I peep,—
Just peep
Over my prison wall,
Then spreading my arms with a swimmer's
sweep,
I brush my creamy raiment aside;
The petals, loosed from their sheaf, divide.
Behold my throat, my bosom, my side!
Now to your outstretched arms I leap,
My lover, and yield you all.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

V. DUET

Ah, the joys that lovers feel
 Lovers, only lovers, know.
Now the enraptured senses reel,
 Lips to lips are nearing slow.
Breast to bosom softly sinking,
 Eyes to eyes their deeps reveal.
Ever thirsting, ever drinking,—
 Ah, the joys that lovers feel !

VI. INTERLUDE

The Queen speaks.

Poet, beloved, lean to me, look up—
So, full upon me. Let your idle hand
Play with my hair's loose treasure if it will,
Only lie still and do not turn your eyes.
My breath comes softly and my heart beats light
Beneath the gentle burden of your head.
But ah ! the lines, the cruel lines of care
And torturing thought that seam your tired brow.
Tell me about the day in that far land
Where you must toil and fight and win your rest
At length thus—now a kiss—within these arms.

The Poet answers.

Ah ! love, strain not too close against my breast,
Nor tease me till I crush those budded lips,

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

Nor fan the fervid fires of my soul
With your wild voice. For now I would that life
Might pause for ever in this peaceful hour,
This languor of a summer afternoon
When one soft word might break the trance of
dream.

VII. ANTIAPHONY

The Queen, looking upward.

How limpid seems the air, how near the sky,
Where high-decked galleons of the gods ride by!

The Poet, gazing at her.

They come to us from undiscovered lands,
With gleaming jewels for your throat and hands.

The Queen.

No ripple breaks the ocean's tranquil sheen,
Spread out in one broad robe of glassy green.

The Poet.

'Tis but a silken pathway for your feet,
Leading to where the sea and sunset meet.

The Queen.

How wondrous is our isle, to Love alone
And to the poppy-crownèd dream-god known.

The Poet.

It may be that some daemon of the mind
Has set us here apart from all mankind.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

The Queen, turning to him.

Yet sky and sea and land were but a name,
A something less than dreams, before you came.

The Poet.

But 'twas the steadfast lode-star of your eye
That drew me to this shore—my heart knows why.

VIII. BALLAD

The Queen sings.

Once long ago an island
Rose from the lone mid-sea,
And there a calm-browed wizard ruled
A spirit colony.

One was a monster foul of form,
And one a thing of air
That sang and floated on the wind
With wings of gossamer.

There oft was heard strange music
And sound of twangling strings,
And wilful marsh-fires danced and dodged
In midnight wanderings.

* * * *

One night a gallant vessel
Came plunging through the gloom;
The fierce winds hounded her, the sea
Yawned like a hollow tomb.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

The wizard by his magic art
Brought all the crew to land:
'Twas King Alonzo with his train
And his son Ferdinand.

And when the wicked courtiers
Conspired against their lord,
The wizard checked their bad intent
And set them in accord.

Meantime Prince Ferdinand had met
The wizard's daughter fair,
And all the blessings of the gods
Sunned down upon the pair.

The prince above all women found
Miranda first and best,
And she who knew no other man
Scarce wished to see the rest.

* * * *

The wizard's staff is broken,
His book is buried deep,
Yet still for us the lovers
Their old-time magic keep.

For still they often wander there
For ever young and gay,
Where only lovers see them pass
And hear the words they say.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

IX. THE POET MUSES

So, little Queen, I thank you for your story.

Surely I feel their gentle presence near
Whom you have sung. Yes, fact is transitory;
Dreams, only dreams are deathless, free from fear.

Brightly the dream-fields bloom in endless summer—
Calm, cloudless June—on islands such as ours.
Richly their perfume greets the bold new-comer
Whom wings of fancy have wafted to the flowers.

We, too, are dreams, or stuff that dreams are made
on,
Our hope is not of earth or change or time.
We are as strings that heavenly tunes are played on,
Harmonies thrilling from spirit realms sublime.

Yet are we more than phantoms in a vision,
More than mere forms another's mind controls.
We, we alone, have found this land Elysian,
Fair as our love and mystic as our souls.

X. THE QUEEN TURNS TO HIM PASSIONATELY

Oh my king, oh my king, it is you
Who have found this land and made me its queen.
It is you with your eyes that glow,
It is you with your soft, bright hair.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

For you take me into your arms,
And straight with your kisses we float, we float
Up through the luminous air
Into the sunset's gold.
We float, and I fall asleep
And dream of a great white lily
That sleeps and sways with the swaying tide.
Till at last from afar, afar
Sounds a call like a trumpet-tone,—
Your call,—and I wake and spread
My arms in my cold, dark cell,
Till the petals unfold and the light streams in,
And joy streams into the cup of my heart
Till it nearly o'erflows in tears.
For there on the bank, erect and tall,
Stands he who possesses me all in all.
Now he leans and stretches his arms to me;
Oh my king, oh my king, it is you!

XI. THE POET KNEELS TO HER

Little queen, my own sweet queen,
Let me kneel and let me lean,
While my head as in a nest
Stirs with your unquiet breast.
Lover now and slave I feel,
For I clasp you as I kneel.
Sad gray eyes that beam above me,
Why so wistful when you love me?
Yet I need not ask, for I
Breathe more rapture in a sigh

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

Than with laughter's mad excess
Love-fraught heart could e'er express.
Laughter, child of joy and hope,
Can with transient pleasures cope.
Fair-haired Laughter, free from troubles,
Plays with glinting rainbow bubbles.
But perfect joy secluded lies
In Sorrow's dark-lashed, serious eyes.

Bend to me, love; not too much,
Only so our lips may touch.
Kiss of fire, what flames you kindle!
Earthly thoughts and feelings dwindle
As the landscape shrinks below,
While toward heaven our spirits go,
Disembodied in some rare
Region of a purer air.

Passion-winged like seraphs we
Float through an ethereal sea,
Fainting into ecstasy.
Sunset steeps the air in gold,
But we turn not to behold.
Darkness comes, and from on high
Stars look out as we go by;
Undismayed we meet the glare
Of their myriad chilly stare.
Then the solemn moon soars up,
Filling night's inverted cup
With pale disquiet. So at last,
Falling gently, then more fast,
We descend, clasped closer still
To shield us from the night-wind's chill,
Of these wonders half aware

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

As we plunge through roaring air.
Shall our souls of heavenly birth
Perish when they reach the earth?
Hearts throb hard and breath is still,
But love, let come what must and will,
Nought can fright us, nought can sever;
We are one for now and ever.

Darkness,—silence, yet I hear
Fluttered breathing near, most near.
And my scattered thoughts are straying
To and fro in rhythmic swaying
With your breath. It must be you.
Who of all the world else, who?
But—where are we? I recall
A light swift shock, and that is all.
We were in darkness I supposed,
Yet my eyes have not been closed,
And your eyes that fixèd shine
Have not one instant turned from mine.
Only my lips press yours more tightly,
And your breath has quickened slightly.
All is o'er—our lips part—so,
Dearest, I must let you go.
We must give our passion rest
Ere its pulsing in the breast
Weary the feeble mortal frame.
I must go, love, as I came.
For as yet I must not stay
Beyond the closing of the day,
And now the crimson sunset streams
Over the sea with lurid beams.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

As yet I may not wait the star
That comes where plighted lovers are.
Our love's march is but beginning,
Every day some conquest winning
In our hard, reluctant hearts.
Every day his golden darts
Drive cold selfishness and fear
Before him. Every day more near
Humble lips and vassal eyes
Approach his tender mysteries.
Soon, love, soon will come the day
When I need not sail away.

But for to-night our joys are o'er.
See my shallop on the shore
And the dolphins how they foam,
Eager for the voyage home.
Rise, my queen, and bid me go,
For to-morrow well you know
I shall come again. My pledge
I give you at the water's edge.
Lest you doubt I prove untrue,
Sea, I leave my heart with you.

XII. THE QUEEN, DETAINING HIM

Stay, oh, stay !
My king, my knight, my poet in one ;
You that have given this land to me,
You that have given your love to me,
You that have given a soul to me,

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

Given and caused it to grow
And open to you like the lily's flower.
Why must you go
Back to the land whence the bad dreams come,
Back to the land of strife?
See, I hold you;
My hands are twined o'er your neck,
My eyes and my heart's deep longing
That drew you first to this fairy isle,
Hold you a prisoner now.

[*She releases him.*

And yet, my knight,
I never would make you false to your honour's vow,
Never would have you recreant,
Ever would have you brave.
Still in the vanward of battle
Where the clangour of combat is harsh,
There shall you be, my gentle poet and knight,
Felling the foremost invaders,
Rescuing the captive, raising the fallen,
And bearing at last in triumph
The banner of victory.
And I, though my heart would break
To think of you slain or wounded,
Bid you forth.
See, I loosen your tight-locked fetters,—
One kiss for ransom, proud knight,
And now, go, go!

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

XIII. DUET

Hand on shoulder, yearning glance,
Melting, mingling each in each,
Stand we on the pebbly beach
Where the ripples lap and dance.
Ah, so much, so much to tell
Now that we must say farewell!

Word and voice will not obey
Called to such a hopeless task,
Yet I know, sweet, what you ask,
And you feel what I would say.
How this happens he can tell
Who has loved and said farewell.

Love outpoureth from the deep,
Kisses may not touch its source,
Measureless the mighty force
When its tidal pulses leap.
Ebbing now the subtle spell.
We must part. My love, farewell.

Now I hold you, now I press
Burning kisses, sweet with pain,
On your lips that kiss again,
Quivering, too, with tenderness.
Heart to longing heart must tell
All the sad joy of farewell.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

XIV. THE POET SAILS AWAY

Climbing up to the darkening sky,
Still I gaze where thy shores recede,—
Fade to a blur,—till I scarce descry
One dim trace of my loved Orplede.
Land, farewell,
No sad bell
Tolls in the word as a parting knell.
Thanks to thee,
Kingdom free,
Thou that guardest my queen for me.

XV. THE QUEEN, ALONE

So he is gone, the far-borne song is still,
And dewy-fingered night above the waters
Lets down her star-embroidered canopy.
There is a sadness in remembered joy,
Because 'tis past, that makes the memory brighter
Of what it was, as sombre twilight shades
Make dreams of sunlight lovelier than the day.
Now first I know what rapture I have lived.
Wondrous is passion flushed with burning noon,
But sweet the hour of evening afterthought.
The air grows chill, I'm tired with happiness,—
'Tis time to nestle in my lily's cup.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

Twilight

COME out beneath the darkening sky where
glistens
 A tranquil star,
While soft-lipped night leans down to us and listens.
 How very far
Remote is now the flood of thronging faces
That swept me from the isle of your embraces !
The miser in his den by one small candle
 Counting his gain
Forgets, while he his golden hoards may handle,
 The day's hard strain.
So now by yon star's light I only see
The lips and eyes that are the wealth of me.
Convention's wall held us by day asunder ;
 Lean close then now
And let us sink into that land of wonder
 The gods allow
To open but by night its dreamy portals
For those whom love has raised to the immortals.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

Love Songs in May

I.

O H, ways are long and the world is wide,
With many a land for the wanderer's feet.
When Beauty's the lode-star, Youth the guide,
Then ho for the wayfaring life so sweet!

I have filled mine eyes, I have wandered far.
(Oh, ways are long and the world is wide)
And now o'er your head the guiding star
Stands still. Naught is fair in the world beside.

II.

It passes in a moment,
The time that lovers know,
When blood and breath and being
In one strong impulse flow.

Then eyes in glances mingling
Are but the spirits' type,
Then hands for hands are seeking,
And lips for lips are ripe.

It passes in a moment,—
Let not the moment fly,
For love must live by loving,
Or even love will die.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

III.

If you love me, do not tell me.
When I meet you I shall know,
If your hand draws back and trembles,
And the words come strange and slow.

If your eyes through veiling lashes
Bashfully yet softly glow,
And your lips, though proudly smiling,
Breathe a sigh of wistful woe,—

Do not tell me, do not tell me,
Let the word unuttered go.
Love is swift to read love's signal ;
I shall see and I shall know.

IV.

Oh, heart, glad heart, break not with promised
pleasure

Before you know fulfilment's ecstasy.

Oh, sink not, blinded by imagined treasure,
Faint eyes, before the golden truth you see.

Sustain, wild lips, the foretaste of a sweetness,
Which well might bid the reeling senses fly.

Break not, till you have known true love's
completeness,

Oh, heart, beat first on hers, then break and die

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

Wave and Tide

O H, ye whose love is passion,
Your love is like the wave,
That rears and falls and shatters,
While short-lived tempests rave !

But we with faith unchanging
In calm and silence hide
The love that sways our being,
The love that is the tide.

Rondeau

I LOVE your voice, but not alone
Because its joyous, skylark tone,
Like angel laughter rippling o'er,
Such sunlight on my soul doth pour
As only southern lands have known.

In truth, when like the rose full-grown
Whose scent on summer winds is blown
Your lips breathe out the red heart's lore,
I love your voice.

But after August joys have flown
To purple seas in tropic zone,
Then sing and win your best encore
From our last guest, the god Amor,
For most in saddest hours, my own,
I love your voice.

JUVENILIA

D

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

A Rhapsody

THE boist'rous waves are hushed to hear
Thy voice more soft than sleep.
The stars, that rise to greet thine eyes,
A spell-bound vigil keep.
The breeze that stirs the charmèd air
Sighs to the night that thou art fair.
The full moon soars above the clouds
And gazes on the sea.
With golden rays a path she lays,—
A road of state for thee.
Ah! sweet, if nature loves thee so,
Think with what fire my heart must glow.

The Spirit of Summer

O H, thou art like a summer cloud
All clad in filmy white,
Or a far-off song that's borne along
The moonlit waves at night.

Thou art a dainty wild-flower
Hid in the roadside grass,
With leaves unfurled and dew empearled
To lure me as I pass.

But cloud and song and wayside flower
Express thee wistfully,
For all the warm long summer's charm
Is but a sigh for thee.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

The Enchantress

SEWARD where the gulls are screaming,
Southward where the spice winds call,
Where the nymphs with loose locks streaming
Dance in nightly carnival,—

Lies an island dimly floating
On the marge of sky and sea,
And the mellow moonbeams gloating
Gild its misty tracery.

There I sail, when breezes sleeping
Smooth the star-path of the deep.
Unseen hands o'er lute-strings sweeping
Lure me up the moonbeams steep,

Till I near the shining shingle
Of that island's mystic shore,
And the songs of sirens mingle
With the breakers' sullen roar.

See! the enchantress from the meadow
Beckons me with starry hand;
Out above the grim cliff's shadow,
Out across the surf-lashed sand.

Crash! upon the hidden ledges
Underneath the cold cliffs' frown,
Sinks my boat,—through tangled sedges
Clutching mermaids drag me down.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

The Forest Maiden

LAND of silence, land of shadow,
Where the rippling streamlets run,
Far beyond the misty meadow
Toward the setting of the sun—

There my thoughts are ever dwelling
With the spirit of my dreams,
And my love is like the welling
Of those silent sliding streams;

And her eyes are like the glimmer
Of the sunlight through the leaves,
When a pool reflects the shimmer
That its limpid depth receives.

Ah, would God that I were going,
As my heart has gone before,
Where those soft-voiced streams are flowing
To that forest-shaded shore!

ASPECTS OF NATURE



THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

The Matterhorn

THE avalanches flee before his frown,
He rules the clouds and tempest with his nod.
Headlong he hurls the pygmy climbers down,
And rears his titan head to mock at God.

Exmoor

S WEEP of the moorland, dun and drear,
Menace of glooming sky;
Stretch of horizon, strong and sheer,
And a curlew's cry.

Dartmoor

R IDGE beyond ridge in misty undulation,
Hot buzz of flies and thin sad bleat of sheep,
One lonely bird with shrill reiteration
Breaking the charm of nature's noonday sleep.

Black, knuckled rocks, the upraised fists of titans
Turned ages since to stone by angry gods,
Buried in earth till scarce their menace frightens,
Like the rebel angels whelmed by hurtling clods.

Low swing the clouds, their pendent shadows trailing
Over furze and fern, wild ponies, sheep and crows.
Strange in the sunlight a sense of gloom prevailing,
Grim pagan gloom mismated with repose.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

On a Photograph

YON boulders cleft and broken by the waves,
Gray, leaning erags that loom above the sea,
Weed-girt and pierced by storm-resounding caves,
Rise like gaunt forms from childish memory.

But love-thoughts gather round the grimmest spots,
When hallowed by the light of boyish dreams;
And these rough, naked cliffs wake sweeter thoughts
Than wait on kindlier shores and sunnier streams.

Winter Monody

THE wold
Is cold,
The day
Is gray.
Below,
The snow
Spreads drear,
Far, near.
On high
Dull sky
A cloud
Doth shroud.
The wold
Is cold.
The day
Is gray.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

Hesper

I TURN to the west and behold,
Where twilight is blending,
A star like a mile-stone of gold
To mark the day's ending.

An Allegory: Temporal and Eternal Beauty

A SUNLIKE star
Beheld from far
Seems a pin-point pierced in the sky,
Less large and bright
In the depth of night
Than a fitful lightning-fly.

A Monotone in Gray

WEET sands touched with glinting light,
A rope of foam blown high,
Long gray billows, crumbling white,
And a gloom o'er sea and sky.

Clouds like a weight of dull distress
Close down, imprisoning me
Alone with the gray world's weariness
And a gray sail far to sea.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

Suggestions

SCENT of the wild, wet marshes,
And lisp of the lazy sea,
And a mouldering wreck 'mid the coarse green
flags
Looming dismally.

Scent of the dank, dark marshes,
And boom of the lonely sea,
And a screaming seagull sweeping by
Like a startled memory.

Rain

I.

HEAR the first loud drops of rain,
As they tumble from the sky,
Lightly tap the heat-limp leaves,
Plumply spatter on the earth,
Hurry thicker, thicker, thicker,
Like to cavalry at gallop,
Till the separate hoof-beats mingle
In a rushing sound continuous.
How the traveller's footstep quickens,
And the children shout and scamper,
And the chickens run for shelter
As the rain falls steady, steady!
As the gay drops tripping, skipping,
Pelt the roofs of tin and shingle,
Spill to earth from eaves and ledges,

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

Burst the fleets of glinting bubbles
Sailing down the swimming pavement,
Pour from out the throbbing rain-pipes
Sluice and gurgle down the gutters.

And the poor folk in the houses,
Leaning from their attic windows,
Bless the coming of the shower.
And the sick folk on their couches
Turn upon their fevered pillows
Toward the cool, refreshing darkness
And the soft, staccato cadence
Of the rain,—
Hearing glad the liquid downpour
Of the drops unintermittent,
While they drink the lyric melody of rain.
Ah! they bless the gentle mercy
Which the kindly heavens afford
To the parching, thirsty, dust-afflicted earth,
While a gray and heavy cloud
Hides the fierce sun in a shroud,
And delights the ears of mortals
With the glad relief of rain;
With the drizzle and the dripping
And the inarticulate trickling,
With the swishing of the silver veil of rain.

II.

Hear the sudden mountain rain
As it hisses down the wind,
Driven like a hail of hate
Hurtling from a hurried hand;
While a voice behind the tempest

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

Laughs and laughs with hollow rattling
In his hairy, hellish throat,
And his eye gleams like a fire-ball,
Flashes like a fallen angel's
Through a pall of Stygian blackness.
And the rain comes in a phalanx,
Spear-length after stinging spear-length,
Tears the earth, a clawing harpy,
Snatches leaves and twigs and branches;
Rends the tree-trunk from the hillside;
As a dreadful, desperate dragon
Bent on vengeance and destruction
Rides the wind with whelming wing-beats.

Now the mountaineer sits chattering
By his dim and fireless hearthstone,
Cowers and waits and listens fearful
To the lashing of the rain-gusts
And the menace of the thunder;
Hears the winds which first scream past him,
Or, again, with hungry whimperings,
Sniff around each chink and crevice,
Like to wolves or hell-hounds eager,
Hunting with unholy huntsmen.

Then, at last, the maddened giant
Whirls a stout oak from its lodgment,
Smites the chimney, bursts the roof-tree,
And the trampling rain in triumph
Tears the rocks from off the carcass
Of the crushed and bleeding man.
And the wild, impetuous torrent
Sweeps the mangled body downward
'Mid the grim reverberations of the rain.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

Autumn Reverie

AT the triumph march of Autumn, when the mists and mountains meet,
And the vassal forest monarchs scatter largesse at her feet,
When the pallid face of sorrow reddens with remembered joy,
And the lusty green of pleasure fades lest ever freshness cloy,
When the purple hills are drowsing like a slothful giant's brood,
And the melting skies are tender o'er a grief half-understood—
Know, though Beauty's forms are transient as the withered leaves that fall,
Yet the deathless Soul of Beauty is the hidden source of all.

SHIFTING MOODS

E

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

Unanswered

WITH ringing voice I summoned Fame
Till earth re-echoed with the cry,
But now I murmur Love's dead name
And hear no whisper in reply.

On the Rhine

BRIEF was our friendship, brief the space
When I might look into your face,
And feel within your hazel eyes
The glow of silent sympathies ;
While charmed we sat and watched the Rhine
Roll down past verdant slopes of vine,
And craggy cliffs, with castles dight,
Where erst dwelt many a fabled knight.
So did we sit, and yet methought
Your presence to my memory brought
Sweet echoes of a distant home,
Grown faint to one long wont to roam,
America's frank joy brimmed o'er
As mountain streams their torrents pour.
One thought held both, our glances met;
The Rhine sped by—did we regret ?
An impulse older than the Rhine
Swept down the tide your soul with mine.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

Convention jarred, we had not spoken,
The Rhine flowed on, the spell was broken,
And yet, as now I count the cost,
I cannot deem that instant lost
When, souls transcending silence, we
Stemmed glorious waves of ecstasy.
We both had lived, we each had gained;
What matter if no more remained?
Thus now I see and understand
Your sweet face in that foreign land.

The Face at the Window

H E strode through a street of his native town.
From an upper window a face looked down.

"Oh gentle face so maiden sweet,
I will wander no more in the crowded street.

Your lips allure me, you weave a snare
Of your starlight eyes and your twilight hair.

The world is barren, the world is wide;
I will seek no joy but the joy at your side."

Then the youth would have turned to knock at the door,

But he paused to look at the world once more;—

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

When out of the sunset's glittering gate
A woman flamed in a car of state.

Her robe was a tinsel of trembling light,
In a crystal goblet the wine foamed bright.

Her crimson lips breathed a melting plaint,
Like a perfume sensuous, strange and faint:

"Renounce me not till you taste the bliss
That quivers in my panting kiss.

My body, my treasure shall all be yours,
Though monarchs have been my paramours."

He reeled, he stretched forth eager hands,
He followed the vision to distant lands.

He drank to the dregs, but when years had passed
He staggered back to his home at last.

He stood in the street where once before
He had sought the latch of the maiden's door.

"Oh God! to have followed my first desire,
To have shunned the temptress with lips of fire.

Yet now I repent of my mad youth's sin,
My first love may pity and take me in."

He knocked, he beat on the door with might,
Till strength and hope were exhausted quite.

Some mocked, some pitied, then all passed o'er,
But the face at the window appeared no more.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

The Quest of Beauty

B ECAUSE thou bidd'st me forth upon a quest
Of the ideal, thou art not less true
Than Spain's brave Queen, who sent to regions
new

Her Admiral with jewels from her breast.

And if to unseen shores thou thinkest best

To urge me, with Desire for my crew,

I'll kiss thy royal hand for last adieu

And sail into the gold glow of the West.

Then if I win safe with my treasure home,

What matter plaudits of the surging crowd?

Thine eyes are my reward, thy heart my goal.

But if I perish in the blinding foam

And sink unmarked, thy pennon for my shroud,

Weep not, but say, "He had a loyal soul."

The May Child

"Sweet Joy I call thee---"—*Blake*.

W HY is the world so fair to-day
For those who despise or reject?
Why do the flowers return with May
When we their message neglect?

Speak, little Joy, with thy wordless grace
In a rapture of glad surprise.
'Tis to waken the smile on a baby's face
And the love in a baby's eyes.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

Chopin : C Minor Etude

STERN the dominant coast-wall stands,
While the surging rebel sea,
Mad to rhythmic ecstasy,
Storms against its proud commands.

Flashing foams the ordered line,
Lashing tempest speeds the charge
Crashing fearless to the marge
Where the sullen rocks combine.

Thund'rous in the onset roar
All the forces of the deep,
Tiger-fierce, they crouch and leap;
Shamed and shattered, backward pour.

But they rally undismayed;
Reinforced, again they form,
Reeling drunken with the storm,
Sweep, and break like shivered blade.

Yet if once the cloud-wrath lifts,
'Mid the gray crags dimly seen
Shimmers sward-space, touched to green
By a sunshaft through the rifts.

Stern the dominant coast-wall stands,
While the oft-scorched rebel sea,
Mad to frantic ecstasy,
Writhes beneath its cold commands.



A BELATED DAYDREAM

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

Actæon

THE crystal morning of a summer's day,
Cool with that liquid stillness which the night
Had poured o'er all the earth, nor had the sun
As yet drunk off the dew to slake his thirst;—
This morn beheld a hunter not less fair
Than he whom Venus doted on, arise
From dreamless sleep, do on his hunting dress,
And stride along a rocky, steep ravine
Where yet the sun's rays reached not. Now the
youth

Would pause to listen how a speckled thrush
Made solitude sweet, then with unforced delight
He yielded to the downward slope the speed
Of his firm thighs, and like an eager wind
Swayed grass and leafage in his swift career;
Till at the last, hemmed in by thorny brakes,
He stopped and laughed and held his panting sides.
A gallant stripling he, who knew no care
Save of the hunt; not yet his fast-fixed heart
Had leapt with nameless rapture in the dark,
As some hid mountain spring called forth to life
Brims over with an impulse not its own.
And yet on sultry eves the village girls
Would cease their talking if he chanced along,
Tired and loaded with his trophies won,
Would lower their eyes in fear to meet his glance,
And look again when he had passed them by,
Following his lithe form down the dusky street.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

Therefore Actæon (so the youth was called)
Had ne'er been happier than now; he wished
No dim postponement to his days of bliss,
But just the joys of motion and of rest
In ever fresh recurrence. Glad he leaned,
And heard a hushed stream murmur as it went,
Then traced a rich mosaic in the moss—
The fresh green malachite, the faded brown—
Such things he loved, and gave what faith he
had
To the dear Cause so mighty, so benign.

He worshipped not Dame Ceres, fruitful Queen,
But her who is the type of woods and hills,
Regions inviolate of communal men
And human harvest; her the chaste and fleet
Whose fairness is the fairness of the snow,
Of fountain sources and the bloodless moon.
There are amid the multitude of men
Some hearts which, set apart from common ways,
Love Nature in her chasteness, not as mother,
But as the virgin ever young and fair,
Who dwells in forests, mistress of the chase,
Or on the serried cliffs of mountains grim
Rejoices in the clear untainted air,
Gazing adown on pygmy huts and flocks,
Nor minglest in the passionate moods of men.

At length Actæon roused himself once more,
Strung his stout bow and, bending cautiously,
Pressed forward through the tangle of the brake.
First his advancee was slow, the parted boughs
Whipped at his eager face, at every step
The heavy undergrowth and matted grass

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

Impeded him; but soon he burst forth free
Into a sun-flecked glade whence, swift as fear,
He sped along an aisle of resinous pines,
Spurning with rhythmic foot the springy mast.
Long time he ran unwearied, but no stag
Sprang up in vain attempt to flee his shaft,
Till the youth thought: "It must be that the
deer

Have shunned the level for the mountain slope.
I needs must climb the first long, craggy ridge
That leads toward Kelmon and Diana's grove."
So done, he struggled now o'er boulders huge
As those which the Cyclopes raised in tiers
To build Mycene's far-seen citadel.

The hunter joyed to feel the streaming sweat
Flow rill-like down his arms. Sometimes he stopped
And saw the dusty lizards dart along
From crack to crevice of the sun-bathed rock,
Like salamanders amorous of the heat.

The burnished sky shone pitiless as steel;
No song of birds trilled forth, only the flies
Droned savagely. What wonder if the youth
Was glad to gain the shade! He rested there
Propped by a lichenèd log, then slowlier
Set forward, wandering on as chance might lead.

Then—why should heart leap like a deer i' th'
toils,
And cower in trembling wonder at its bonds?—
Actæon saw the sacred grove of pines
Whereto no man may enter unchastised.
The youth's first impulse was to turn away
In reverence. "But, no," he thought, "the goddess

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

Is surely elsewhere ; how if I should peep
Into her covert, what of all the world
Could I so wish for as one slightest glimpse ? ”
What deed can lure like that which none has
dared ?

His nameless love of things remote and pure
Burned like a sensual flame, a very lust
For chastity, to clasp her form of snow,
Be caught up like a dewdrop to the moon,
Renounce the world and dwell with her alone.
Cat-like, he stole across the open glade ;
Then, cold and trembling to the finger-tips,
Half sank to earth, his brown knee touched the
floor

Of velvet moss as in a curtained shrine
One kneels on some soft fabric of the East.
He strove to pray, but how would prayers find
grace

Coming from one who wilfully transgressed
The gods' command ? By now had reason swooned
Into the arms of longing. Naught was heard
In mad Actæon's heaving breast but throbs
Of wild desire to see, to know the truth,
Fall to the goddess' feet and die content.

Forward he crept. At first the grove was still
Save that spent winds washed through the sleepy
pines.

Then heard he gentle crackling of light twigs ;
His heart swelled as he felt how near it was.
He heard gay voices, laughter silver-clear
And splash of water. Looking straight before,
The hunter saw a screen of flowering vines

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

Through which came glint of water, or of somewhat
More glittering yet. Thought could not picture it.

Actæon bounded o'er the noiseless earth,
Parted the leaves and gazed, himself unseen.
A glittering pool spread limpidly beneath,
Ringed with dark pines. Along its further bank
A score of nymphs, white-limbed and silver-breasted,
Kneeled by the marge or bathed within the flood.
And rising o'er the rest, erect and tall,
Naked as Nature's inmost beauties are,
Stood she whom neither god nor man as yet
Enjoyed so much as with a look. Her gaze
Was downward, pensive were the dark-fringed eyes,
Her arms hung at her unimagined side,
She seemed as one who felt that love had come,
But she must put it by. Perchance she knew
Actæon's fate, and fain would pardon him,
Could he return in secret as he came.
For him, he sees her beauty, often dreamed,
Which shames all dreaming, loveliness so pure
As would have frozen the leer on Bacchus' lip
To awe. The roughest hind beholding it
Had felt the softness of remembered prayers
Said as a child before his mother's knee.
A Persian king, one like a god on earth,
Had known the meanness of his noblest wish,
Had seen his vain pomp wither like a flower
At sight of her. What of Actæon then,
When his rapt soul is drawn out like a mist
To cling about the roundness of those limbs,
Dove-like to flutter near those calm, deep eyes,
And fade to naught in uncontrolled adoring?

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

A crescent shone against her smooth black hair,—
'Twas like the moon against the dark of night.
Her arms made seem the assured attempts of art
Like worthless shards of clay, her breast and waist
Were things too lovely for the fasting priest
To think remotely. Not the happiest lover
But had renounced his love, and sworn him straight
To spend his life in lonely ecstasy,
His whole life nourished by one fadeless dream.

Dazed by his whirling thoughts, Actæon breathed
One low cry, then he staggered through the screen.
The frightened nymphs fly headlong to the goddess
To hide her body, but so tall she stands
That still the youth beholds, nor sees one nymph,
Though each is fairer than an earthly queen.
Now suddenly her brow is black with anger.
She speaks: "Rash man, that with blaspheming
eye
Hast here beheld Diana unattired,
This be thy fate." She cast a sudden dash
Of water on his face, and when his eyes
Saw clear again, the maiden troop was gone.
But what is this he feels? His deerskin vest
Grows part of him; he falls to earth; his hands
Can grasp no more, but dig into the ground.
He cannot rise upon his feet, his head
Is wondrous heavy. Gazing in the pool,
Actæon sees a hairy, hornèd stag.
He looks behind him; naught is there but he.
He seeks to run away. How swiftly now
On four small feet he scampers through the fern.
Fast, fast he speeds, exultant as before,

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

(For still his human heart beats fixed in him)

Bounding as confident as a cataract

From crest to slope and downward to the plain.

It chanced that morning that Actæon's mates,
Missing their friend, but none the less resolved
For hunting, gathered with their dogs and nets
And set out slowly down the sunny vale.

Sudden, "A stag!" cries one; the dogs, let slip,
Dive after, and the clamorous hunt is on.

Long hours the brave stag with Actæon's heart
Bounds on unwearied over log and stone,
Fighting with lowered horns through thickets dense,
Stemming a river, toiling up the bank,

And dashing like a mad thing through the clear.

At length the level rays of afternoon

Fell mocking in his desperate eyes, his legs
Were numb and answered not the spur of fear,
Though dogs like Furies yelled upon his trail.

'Twas in a dismal dell, the chilling shade
Of night had struck across. The gallant stag
Turned and (his wondering anguish who can say?)
Beheld his own two hounds, their teeth afoam,
Their eye-balls straining with the lust of hate,
Bear down at him. And when he would have
called,

"Stop! Spare your master," no clear word came
forth,

But hollow bellowings. He lowered his head
To crush the ingrates, but the dogs, too quick,
Spread out on either side, and when he turned
To ward off Leon, Phylax darted in
And closed her tearing fangs upon his throat.

THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE

In vain to shake or trample, Leon now
Is fast upon his flank, more dogs come up,
And last the huntsmen, someone crying out,
“Where is Actæon? would that he could see!
A nobler stag we shall not kill this year!”
Yet in his death-hour, changed Actæon’s heart,
Remembering all the wonder it had known,
Scarce felt the teeth that tore their way to it.

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